

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS

In re: Supreme Court Commission on
Access to Justice

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M.R. 25401

ORDER

In accordance with Supreme Court Rule 10-101, the Court adopts the following Administrative Order to provide further guidance and detail about the process for developing, reviewing and approving standardized court forms and ensuring that these forms remain current:

- (1) In addition to meeting the basic requirements set forth in Supreme Court Rule 10-101, in developing standardized forms pursuant to the Rule, the Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice ("Commission") shall ensure that each form:
 - a. meets the requirements of Illinois law;
 - b. uses plain language in accordance with the federal government's plain language guidelines (www.plainlanguage.gov) to the maximum extent possible;
 - c. will be available in both print and interactive electronic formats, provided that forms may be approved for use before they are available in an interactive electronic format;
 - d. includes instructions, a checklist, and a background statement for self-represented litigants in both print and electronic formats that can be translated into other common languages;
 - e. is developed by a diverse group of judges, clerks, court personnel, and lawyers practicing in the area and tested with the public; and
 - f. allows for electronic filing and accounts for privacy and logistical concerns associated with that process.
- (2) In order to help ensure consistency and coordination among different form groups, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts ("Administrative Office") shall designate a Forms Officer to work with the Commission and any Commission committees or subcommittees involved with the development of standardized forms.
- (3) When the Commission has drafts of standardized forms that the Commission believes should be given final approval, the Commission shall notify the Administrative Office.
 - a. The Administrative Office shall then take the following steps:
 - i. forward a copy of the draft standardized forms to the Conference of Chief Circuit Judges with a notice that the Conference shall have forty-five (45) days to provide the Commission with any feedback or suggestions regarding the proposed standardized forms.

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- ii. post a copy on the Supreme Court website with a notice that any concerned stakeholder shall have forty-five (45) days to provide the Commission with any feedback or suggestions regarding the proposed standardized forms.
 - iii. notify the clerks of circuit and appellate courts, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association and local county bar associations that proposed standardized forms have been posted.
- b. Once the forty-five (45) day notice period has passed, the Commission is authorized to review any feedback or suggestions received, make any revisions it deems necessary, and give final approval to the standardized forms.

(4) With prior Supreme Court approval, and where exigent circumstances require expedited approval of a standardized form or form suite, the Commission's Forms Committee may modify the process to the extent necessary. In so doing, the Forms Committee must use appropriate safeguards to ensure the accuracy and usability of the expedited standardized forms and make all reasonable efforts to allow for public testing, comments, or amendments to any expedited standardized forms before or after their approval.

(4) (5) For all standardized forms that have received final approval from the Commission, the Administrative Office shall post the forms on the Supreme Court website.

- a. The website shall include a notice that these forms are approved by the Commission for use and are required to be accepted in all Illinois courts, and the forms themselves shall also include this notice. The website also should include links to any interactive tools and associated resources developed for each form.
- b. The website shall also include a form and procedure where stakeholders can identify potential updates or changes that may need to be made to the forms.
- c. Upon receipt of any communication identifying a proposed update or change to a standardized form in accord with this process, the Administrative Office shall forward that communication to the Commission for review.
- d. The Commission shall then either suggest revisions to the standardized form in accord with Supreme Court Rule 10-101 and this Order or respond to the party identifying the update or change with reasons why a change is not deemed necessary and forward that response to the Administrative Office for posting on the website.

(5) (6) The Supreme Court website shall provide a method by which interested stakeholders can suggest that new and/or additional forms be created and approved by the Commission.

- a. Upon receipt of any communication suggesting that new and/or additional forms be created and approved, the Administrative Office shall forward that communication to the Commission for review.
- b. The Commission shall address the suggestion by either:
 - i. creating and approving new or additional forms in accordance with Paragraphs (1) and (3) of this Order, or
 - ii. responding to the party making the suggestion with reasons why the suggested new and/or additional forms are not deemed necessary, and forwarding that response to the Administrative Office for posting on the website.

Dated November 28, 2012. Amended January 8, 2021.